

OPINION

EDITORIAL BOARD OPINION

Here's your chance to be heard on Micron project

Editorial Board



A rendering of Micron Technology's planned chipmaking complex in Clay from the company's draft environmental impact statement filed in March.
Micron Technologies

The Micron project reached an important milestone last month when the 20,000page Draft Environmental Impact Statement was released to the public.

Micron plans to build up to four computer chip factories at the corner of Route 31 and Caughdenoy Road. The project, which Micron says could cost \$100 billion and employ 9,000 people, would be the largest private investment ever in New York state.

The DEIS, two years in the making, exhaustively details all of the ways that building a semiconductor factory in the town of Clay will affect everything from air quality to traffic to population to housing to wetlands to wildlife.

Staff writer Glenn Coin began reporting on the report in April, when he obtained a version of it. It had been in Onondaga County's hands since December but the county turned down requests from The Post-Standard/[syracuse.com](https://www.syracuse.com) under the Freedom of Information Act to release it.

Now that the full report is out, we have to wonder why all the secrecy and stonewalling. There are no bombshell revelations or hairy surprises in either the report itself or Coin's deeper look into its contents.

The DEIS does begin to convey the mind-boggling size and complexity of what Micron is proposing.

The entire complex, including utility buildings and offices, would cover nearly 1,000 acres, an area nearly three times bigger than the New York State Fairgrounds. Up to 4,200 construction workers would be needed at any one time for much of the next 16 years. The project will tax local roads such that major improvements will be necessary, including a brand-new exit on Interstate 81 in Cicero and a complete redesign of the I-81/Route 31 intersection. The plan to fill 200 acres of wetlands and ponds will require nine million cubic yards of fill — enough to fill the JMA Wireless Dome to the roof five times. The

project will have significant impacts on wildlife, including several endangered or threatened species.

And the payoff? If all four fabs are built, thousands of construction and permanent jobs. An infusion of up to 64,000 new residents and the businesses to serve them. And fulfillment of a key goal of the federal CHIPS and Science Act: to produce memory chips domestically again, more than a billion of them a year.

Approval of the DEIS is just the first step in the approval process. It lays out the significant regulatory hurdles ahead. For example, Micron will need to get 34 separate permits from federal, state and local governments to execute its plans. Each one represents a potential roadblock or delay. Both the federal and state governments require this extensive environmental review.

This is why it takes so long to build anything. Gov. Kathy Hochul acknowledged as much in a recent meeting with the editorial board, saying she was “fed up” with the pace of state environmental reviews. “We’ll make sure that all the health, safety and community and environmental concerns are addressed. But we do get caught up in bureaucracy,” she said.

Micron is Hochul’s chance to rewrite that script.

Here’s where you come in. If you want to be heard on the Micron project, Onondaga County and the U.S Department of Commerce are accepting written comments on the report until Aug. 11. A daylong public hearing – with sessions in the morning, afternoon and night — will be held Thursday at Liverpool High School.

Micron has to respond to “substantive” comments before the report can be finalized, and a decision can be rendered. We urge the government agencies reviewing the project not to dally in addressing the public’s concerns so the project can move forward.